

# The Strangest City

LARGEST MOVING  
PICTURE STAGE  
IN THE  
WORLD



## In the World!

**It Will Open Its Gates as a Municipality on March 15, and  
All the World Is Invited to Be Present on That Occasion**

**K**ISSING the desert in the San Fernando valley, just a breath from Los Angeles, at a spot where the balmy California sun seems more radiant, the azure sky more blue and the kaleidoscopic scenery more bewitching than in any other portion of that wonderful country, is located the strangest city in the world.

Universal City is just outside the alkali belt and a few months ago was nothing but a large area of barren ranch land. Just how it came to develop into a thriving city will be told in the following story, which reads more like a chapter from some mythical legend than a narrative of actualities.

About a year and a half ago a man rather small in stature, with a very big idea, went west prospecting for a place to build a "real" town. He had secreted in a spot just south of his hat band, all that was necessary to produce a town, and all that he lacked was a decision as to the exact locality where to build it. He hadn't been off the train at Hollywood an hour before he began working his brain overtime, and in almost less time than it takes to write out the check he had bought this barren ranch land for a sum that would have made many others gasp. And when he stepped into his hotel that night he had awarded a contract to Big Bill Hoxley to build a city big enough to hold two acres, public buildings, a postoffice, an entire menagerie, laboratories, two hospitals, the largest open air stage, an interior stage, a theater and, in fact, all that the ordinary city of today requires to give it a spot on the map.

And to back up his idea and plans for the strangest city in the world the little man took from his pocket a bank book which testified that he was fully competent to award such an enormous contract. In fact, he stood ready to plank down a cool million for this first job.

### The Man Who Built the City.

When Mr. Carl Laemmle arose the next day, which was just about the time old Sol was pushing his nose over the crest of a distant peak, he went out to examine the country he had purchased. He found included in the list of articles were a couple of mountains, river or two, a few small hills, a forest and a lake thrown in. He was truly a monarch of all he surveyed, and no matter which way he turned Laemmle Land lay before him.

That day he began building the city. As the process continued he proceeded to fill this city with houses, restaurants, residences, and so forth. A theater sprung up, followed by a church; foundations were laid for a postoffice, while carpenters, bricklayers, masons and laborers were as busy as a well populated hive of the busiest bees. He bought everything imaginable and carried it out to his city. He played with the earth and laid an excellent water main and planned a city sewer, mapped out parks and boulevards for working and recreation purposes. He bought an entire menagerie from a traveling showman and built cages—large steel cages—out in the open for the beasts and soon had one of the largest and finest collection of beasts in captivity.

He bought high spirited, full blooded western horses, and cowboys who knew how to ride them; in the many western dramas which were to be enacted within the walls of the city. Horses for the cowpunchers and stables for the horses followed. A mammoth glass covered studio, with enough glass to provide a monoco for every Englishman in the world, was built with two stages 300 and 200 feet in length. Later he supplemented this by a gigantic new indoor studio, the largest and most thoroughly equipped in the world.

Almost since the days of the apostles men have been engaged in building, and they have achieved remarkable results from the manner in which they have defied the surface of this earth. But it is safe to say that no more remarkable city has ever risen from the ground than the one which was built by Mr. Carl Laemmle. Not one penny was spared in the effort to make Universal City one of the most attractive cities west of the Mississippi, and he has succeeded so well that one could not enter it with dignity without a motorcar.

### A Permanent Exposition.

If you visited Luna Park you might obtain a partial idea of what Universal City looks like; the Pan-American Exposition could not approach it in beauty; the Jamestown Exposition could not equal it; Sleep-

head's Bush—that renowned aristocratic amusement place of London—is not in the running, and it is doubtful if the San Diego and Panama-Pacific Expositions could be considered as competing. Universal City is quite different from anything ever seen before in cities. It is the masterpiece of a master mind of a master man. It stands alone. It is a lasting and permanent exposition.

But, most of all, is the remarkable manner in which the city was constructed. It is nothing more or less than a chameleon city, for it can be changed in three days to conform to any style of architecture of any nation in the world. The twenty producers can change Universal City almost in the twinkling of an eye to resemble any of the metropolitan cities of America or Europe. Its interior can be transformed into an Athens, a Rome, a Paris, a London or a New York, with their various characteristics. In so short a time it will take your breath away and cause you to gasp in astonishment. They are city makers.

SCENE FROM "DAMON AND PYTHIAS" AND FROM TERENCE O'ROURKE SERIES AT UNIVERSAL CITY.



PRESIDENT CARL LAEMMLE.

STREET SCENE REPRESENTING ALGIERS AND SCENE FROM "THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING," ALL BUILT AT UNIVERSAL CITY.

are these wizards of the screen, and they can work wonders which heretofore have been left to the artist of legenddom.

### No Expense Spared in Production.

Let us give you an illustration of just how far this idea has been carried out in the designing of this city. The bridges which span the gulches and streams are so constructed that they can take on the aspect of a Japanese arch bridge, a Roman paved or capitol bridge, a Venetian bridge, an American trestle and an English causeway or Japanese pontoon bridge. All the director has to do is to give a few hours' advance notice to the producer and his demands will be satisfied. Should the reader be present when a series of ever changing scenes are being taken for a big serial he would see marvels which would puzzle him in trying to ascertain whether he were sleeping or tossing about in the throes of some wonderful mythical legend. Such are the workings of the inventive mind of that little man who went west about a year and a half ago with a great big idea tucked away beneath his hat. It was a Napoleonic task and one that required the mind of an emperor to fulfill it.

But before we go further, dear reader, we will give you a glimpse of something which happened in the strangest city in the world the other day, which will manifest to you the great extremes to which Universal City will go to give the public a finished production.

On this very ground, inside the walls of the city, the writer saw 1,500 actors taking part in one scene of "The Campbells Are Coming," which by this time has been shown to the world. In this scene were several hundred Scotch pipers which were brought from Calgary, Vancouver and Montreal to take part in this wonderful story of the Scotch Indian Mutiny. The sight of these Scotch laddies, clad in their plaid, and marching erect to the tune of the pipes, their little Timothy hats cocked on their heads in true Scotch style, was indeed an impressive scene for any one to behold. They marched against the Sepoys, who were barricaded behind a fortress which stretched a considerable distance through the San Fernando

attend the official opening, which will take place on March 15. And the man who is responsible for it all will be there to glory in the ultimate realization of his dream. He has invited the president of the United States, the governors of various states, mayors of many of the leading cities and other officials to be present on that date. He invites the entire population of the United States to come whenever they feel like it and remain within the city as long as they like.

### Your Favorite Actor Is There.

For the visitor there will be every convenience. In addition to seeing the technical departments, where he will be shown just how films are made, the visitor can visit the Japanese gardens, the open air gymnasium, the wonderful lake in the very center of the city, or he can rest by the side of the reservoir, which is located on one of the hill tops. In another part of the grounds will be found a spacious restaurant where 600 people can be accommodated and only the best food served. The children will be interested in the school for motion picture children and the animal farm near by, which, unlike a circus, here today and gone tomorrow, is a permanent menagerie with trained and wild animals. Here they can gaze at the elephants, camels, zebras, water buffalo, lions, tigers, bears, leopards, wildcats, wolves, monkeys and fifty species of dogs. These are in addition to horses, cattle, pigs, sheep and a collection of birds.

But the greatest attraction for the moving picture fan who visits Universal City will be their favorite movie actors. Inside the walls of the moving picture municipality you will find J. Warren Kerrigan browsing around in his shirt sleeves; Billie Ritchie, the man who put the laugh in laughter; Grace Guard, who in her Secret Service series proved how much mystery a versatile actress could hold around nothing; Francis Ford, who is the Beau Brummel of the city; Herbert Rawlinson, who makes such a lovely Sanford Quest and who is being deluged with letters from admirers daily; Eddie Lyons and Victoria Ford, who are admitted to be the greatest Newlywed couple ever seen on the screen; Cleo Madison, who is as beautiful as she is gifted; Murdock MacQuarrie, who makes such a grand old man-in-pictures; Violet Messerum, Rosemary Thoby, Anna Little, who are the greatest trio in the dramatic end of pictures; Mary Pickford, who stands alone and is without a doubt the Sarah Bernhardt of the movies. Then there is King Baggot, Ben Wilson, Marie Walcott, William Garwood, Robert Lockwood, who has been making such a hit in "The Master Key"; Frances Nelson, Pauline Bush, Sydney Ayres and, in fact, the greatest list of stars ever brought together under one banner. The Universal has twenty-five of the most popular players in motion, and there is not one fan in the country who does not know them all by name.

### The Universal Special.

I learned later from his secretary that the Universal people will run a special train from New York city direct to Universal City in time for the opening. It will leave New York on or about March 5 for the Pacific coast and the expositions and is due to arrive at Universal City on March 15. Not only will the passengers of the Universal Special be treated to the many rare sights which accompany a transcontinental trip, which accompany a transcontinental trip, but they will have an opportunity of visiting some of the big commercial cities. After leaving Chicago the first stop will be Kansas City, where local moving picture people are preparing appropriate entertainment. At Denver the comfort of the train will not be overlooked. Another stop will be made at Albuquerque, N. M. The grand canyon, with its rare sights, will be the rare treat of the trip, and at Los Angeles, the last stop, the entire population of Universal City will be on hand to welcome the travelers.

All of which goes to prove that the little man who went west prospecting for a location to build a city does everything he undertakes and does it in a way that only a Carl Laemmle—the man who built a city—can do it the right way. And, after all, that is the only way to accomplish anything.

I take my hat off to Mr. Carl Laemmle, who, besides being president of the Universal, finds time to build cities and convert mountains, hills, streams and lakes which heretofore were unfit for habitation into wonderful scenes which rest the eye, ease the tired brain and give us an amusement that is clean and wholesome and fit for the most righteous to look upon. Therefore he is great!

EDWARD LYONS

CLEO MADISON

MURDOCK MACQUARIE

VIOLET MESSERUM

ROSEMARY THOBY

KING BAGGOT

BILLIE RITCHIE

MARY PICKFORD

FRANCES NELSON

ANNA LITTLE